AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete listing of the amended claims with a status identifier in parenthesis.

Listing of Claims

1-26 (Cancelled)

27. (New) A remote terminal in an asynchronous transfer mode network, comprising:

a first path for receiving a first cell with a first plurality of components;

a second path for receiving a second cell with a second plurality of components;

a first multiplexer for routing received first and second cells to and from an asynchronous feeder multiplexer, the asynchronous feeder multiplexer for replacing less than all of the first plurality of components in the first cell with less than all of the second plurality of components in the second cell.

28. (New) The remote terminal of claim 27, wherein the asynchronous feeder multiplexer includes protection logic adapted to compare the first cell with the second cell to select a cell to be output.

29. (New) The remote terminal of claim 28, wherein the protection logic selects for the output the cell which remains after a loss of signal for at least one of the first cell and the second cell has been detected.

30.   (New) The remote terminal of claim 28, wherein the protection logic selects for the output the cell having a best signal quality.

31.   (New) The remote terminal of claim 28, wherein the cell to be output includes at least one of the first plurality of components and at least one of the second plurality of components.

32.   (New)   The remote terminal of claim 31, wherein the selected components in the cell for output are selected based on a best signal quality of the components.

33.   (New) The remote terminal of claim 27, wherein the remote terminal is a portion of a network.

34.   (New) The remote terminal of claim 33, wherein the network is a synchronous optical network (SONET).

35.   (New)   The remote terminal of claim 34, wherein the network employs at least an STS-1 optical bandwidth.

36.   (New)   The remote terminal of claim 33, wherein the network includes metallic channels in the first path and the second path.

37. (New) The remote terminal of claim 36, wherein the network employs DS3 bandwidth.

38. (New) A method of communication at a remote terminal in an asynchronous transfer mode network, comprising:

receiving a first cell with a first plurality of components from a downstream path;

receiving a second cell with a second plurality of components from an upstream path; and

replacing less than all of the first plurality of components in the first cell with less than all of the second plurality of components in the second cell.

39. (New) The method of claim 38, further comprising:

outputting the first cell including replaced components on at least one of the downstream path and the upstream path.

40. (New) The method of claim 38, wherein the replacing is determined by a signal characteristic of the first plurality of components and the second plurality of components.

41. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the signal characteristic is a best signal quality.

42. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the signal characteristic is a remaining signal after a signal loss.

43. (New) A method of communication at a remote terminal in an asynchronous transfer mode network including the remote terminal of claim 27.

42.   (New)   The method of claim 40, wherein the signal characteristic is a remaining signal after a signal loss.

43.   (New)   A method of communication at a remote terminal in an asynchronous transfer mode network including the remote terminal of claim 27.